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The Missionary Call

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THE MISSIONARY CALL.

"I should not like it, were you fitted to be a missionary, that you should drivel down into a king." —*C. H. Spurgeon to his son.*

"There's a call from the dark to-night
(May it haunt your lighted room)
From His 'other sheep,' on the broken steep,
At the edge of eternal doom."

No call. Why, my brother, your salvation is a call. You were saved to serve.

No call. The expecting, unsatisfied Christ is a call of pathos and sweetness.

No call. The billion Christless ones are a call—a call from a thousand million throats. Do you not hear them? The open door, the divine opportunity, is a call.

The man whose call startled the sleeping Apostle from Tarsus, was not only the Macedonian who then was—but the Macedonian who might be, who ought to be, and who surely should be under God's transforming touch.

And so the call from the dark to-night is not so much from the men who are, but from the men who ought to be—from the men who are to be when Jesus meets them and gives to them the life more abundant.

Let us look at this matter of a call a little closer. Before we can say to the Master that we were not called to go with the Good Tidings we must answer these questions to ourselves, as we would be willing to answer them

in the white light of God's great judgment throne.

1. **Are we listening for a call?** We have all known absent-minded people to whom we may speak and our words fall as though upon deaf ears. Absorbed in their own thoughts or wandering fancies, they do not hear. Their eyes tell the tale that they do not comprehend.

Just so our souls tend to become absent-minded. Absorbed in our own plans, or castle building, the voice of the Master awakens no response in our souls, or we catch but broken fragments of His message, and so lose its divine import. Are we listening, or are we absent-minded, bent upon our own plans or fancies?

Are we in the attitude of the writer of the eighty-fifth Psalm, who says (verse 8), "I will hear what God the Lord will speak"?

"I heard Him call,
'Come, follow,' that was all,
My gold grew dim;
My soul went after Him;
I rose and followed, that was all.
Who would not follow if they heard His call?"

2. **Are we willing to be called?** In a general way, we should all like to be great missionary heroes, but the reason we are not is that we are not willing to pay the price. If the Master through His Holy Spirit bore in upon your soul just now the certainty that He was calling to China—are you willing to go?

God will coerce no man. He never owned a slave nor bribed a man. The world is full of

men who have refused God's call. Some of them started and turned back, and many refused point blank to go when called. The writer knows two old men who were both called, but refused; and now, as they sit in the shadow of their fourscore years, while not unmindful of God's many mercies, their hearts are burdened with the thought that they refused when called. Are you willing?

3. Are we within calling distance? God rarely speaks to men in the tornado or the thunder, but in the quiet of their own souls. If you are waiting for some great outward token of God's call, wait no longer, but draw close to Jesus, closer still, and still closer. Ask Him to be your all in all. Make David Livingstone's great dedicatory prayer yours: "My Jesus, my King, my Life, my All, I again dedicate my entire being to Thee," and then ask the Master to show you His plan for your life. Tell Him you want to stay at home or go abroad, be rich or poor, strong or weak, busy or idle, as best you can glorify Him. Make the dedication complete.

This is the way it runs. First, dedication or surrender complete and unconditional, then the fulness of the Spirit, and then the revelation of God's will, and then, oh, the rapture of it! service and ministration—fellowship in His sufferings—and then, and then, the crown of glory and Heaven.

My brother, my sister, get within calling distance. Love always speaks in low and gentle

tones—Jesus whispers His call. Do you not hear Him?

It may be these words are your call. Ask Him.

4. **Have we a call to stay at home?** Jesus will take infinite pains to make His willing followers know His plans, though we be ever so dull of understanding. Our very dullness adds incentive to the Master's patience. His honor is at stake, for He said, "He that wills to do My will shall know." His love demands it.

Now, assuming that you are willing to offer Livingstone's prayer, then propose to yourself these questions: "Have I a call to stay home? Am I needed more in the home land than I am in foreign lands? Am I physically unfit to go? Am I disqualified or barred by obstacles that cannot be surmounted? Can I glorify Christ more by staying than going?"

If not, then why not assume that it was to you Christ said, "Go, ye." If not called to stay home, you are most assuredly called to go. The burden of proof is on you. Did you ever ask the Master to tell you where He wanted you to work? Did you ever ask Him for orders? Did you ever say, "Dear Master, Thy command was 'Go, ye.' Do you mean me?" Or have you just taken it for granted that you were to stay at home?

Besides, the command still stands, "Go, ye."

Well, why don't you go?

Settle with God whether your reason for not going is strong enough to override a positive

command. If you really wish to know God's will towards you in the matter of foreign missions, submit to this test. Obey Christ's command (Luke 10:2), which runs thus: "The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few; pray, ye, therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth laborers unto His harvest." Drop for the time being your own thoughts as to whether you have a call or not, and pray—and oh, pray as though your soul depended on it—that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers. Go on praying, remembering always that the eternal life of multitudes may depend upon your prayers. Do not let a day pass without prolonged and earnest beseeching of the Almighty to send forth laborers.

Meanwhile, keep listening, keep within calling distance, keep willing, and if you do not hear the Master's next command (Luke 10:3), "Go your ways, behold, I send you forth," you may fairly conclude that you have not been called to this special work.

But whether called to stay or go, never give up the prayer to the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers.

And, if called to go, then go, not with drooping head and reluctant feet, but with the joyfulness of the King's ambassador charged with a royal message of eternal Good Tidings.

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain,
His blood-red banner streams afar:
Who follows in His train?

"Who best can drink His cup of woe,
Triumphant over pain,
Who patient bears His cross below,
He follows in His train."

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.)

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it." (Luke 17:33.)

(This "Missionary Call" is a chapter from "A Day of Good Tidings," by C. B. Keenleyside. The book may be had from the Foreign Mission Board, Richmond, Va., for twenty-five cents a copy.)